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NSC BRIEFING

26 January 1954

OBSTACLES TO IRAQI PARTICIPATION  
IN REGIONAL DEFENSE PACT

I. Iraqi government favors regional defense pact with West

Top officials are (1) aware of Soviet danger; (2) desirous of Anglo-American help in building up Iraq's defenses; and (3) in favor of joining Turkey and Pakistan in regional pact.

II. Obstacles blocking defense participation

A. Local politics:

1. Current dissensions between crown prince and elder statesman Nuri Said, eleven times prime minister, threaten downfall of Prime Minister Jamali and his reform-minded cabinet. Jamali has a Columbia University Ph.D and is friendly to US.
2. His downfall would increase popular cynicism toward old guard that has ruled Iraq for 30 years.

B. Anti-Western sentiment

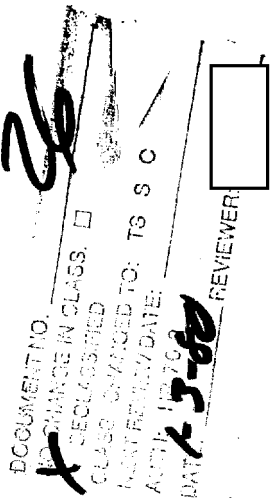
1. TIME magazine's article showing Iraq "chained to the West" printed in full by Communist daily.

State Department review completed

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2. This and other articles, with countless rumors, are increasing popular opposition to any defense link with West.
3. For weeks prime minister has been so criticized by press and so bitterly attacked in parliament for pro-Western sentiment that he appears afraid to assume forthright position.
  - a. As result, he has several times publicly denied that Iraq considering joining any pact.
  - b. He has denied seeking American military aid.
  - c. He has not endorsed Eisenhower atomic energy program, which he told American Ambassador Berry he would like to do.

C. Pressure from other Arab states

1. Currently Arab sentiment, which individual states are loathe to ignore, is opposed to direct military cooperation with West.

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2. Egypt not likely to approve strengthening of Iraq, its major Arab rival.

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3. Syria  indicated opposition to American aid to Iraq and a regional pact including Iraq.

4. Saudi Arabia, because of newspaper articles and rumors highlighting American "imperialist" Middle East defense plans, has turned down offer of American grant military aid.

### III. Anticipated developments

A. Iraq government will probably procrastinate on joining any pact.

B. Will encounter stiff internal opposition to accepting American aid.

C. Will continue to stick publicly with Arab League attitude against defense cooperation with West.

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